

To: the Judicial Committee

Honorable members of the Judicial Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support SB 459: an act concerning the enhanced penalty for the sale or possession of drugs near schools, day care centers and public housing projects.

I live in Hartford Connecticut. Today the city is in crisis. We face the unfathomable reality that one in six Hartford kids currently has a parent in jail. This fact shows the true product of the decades-old drug war: namely that the war is really aimed at communities of color.

The reality is that cities like Hartford, find that almost all of the space within our borders would be considered a drug free zone. Therefore, possession of drugs in Hartford brings with it the mandatory minimum that comes along with the "drug free zones." When it's clear that the overwhelming majority of Hartford residents are Latino and Black, we see an undeniable pattern. This reality is alarmingly racist. Especially when we consider that most towns with a majority of white people, like Avon and Simsbury have very few areas that are "drug free zones."

Clearly the result has helped to make Connecticut one of the most racist states in regard to its justice system. Black men are 12 times more likely to be in jail than White men. This is clearly not something that Connecticut legislators can be proud of. It is certainly something that I am ashamed of, as a Connecticut resident.

As a parent of a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader at Dwight Elementary in Hartford I am far more distressed about the fact that my son's classes have – on average 3-4 kids with parents in jail – then I am worried about people selling drugs near his school, after school hours!!!

Please support the common sense language in SB 459 and help to undo the horrible Jim Crow racism that has beset Connecticut.

Sincerley,

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